

In the Claims

Please replace the claims with the following clean version of the entire set of pending claims, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(i).

A marked up version showing amendments to any claims being changed is provided in one or more accompanying pages separate from this amendment in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii). Any claim not accompanied by a marked up version has not been changed relative to the immediate prior version, except that marked up versions are not being supplied for any added claim or canceled claim.

CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-77.

Please add new claims 78-84 as follows:

78. (New) A method of forming a void region associated with a substrate, comprising:

providing a substrate;

forming a sacrificial mass over the substrate;

forming a layer over the mass; and

subjecting the mass to conditions wherein a component of the mass transports from the mass into the layer to form a mixture of the layer and the component, and wherein transporting the component leaves an enclosed void region between the substrate and the mixture of the layer and the component.

79. (New) The method of claim 78 wherein the layer comprises silicon nitride.

80. (New) A method of forming a void region associated with a substrate, comprising:

providing a substrate;

forming a sacrificial mass over the substrate;

forming a metal-comprising layer over the mass; and

subjecting the mass to conditions which transport a component of the mass to the metal-comprising layer, the transported component being alloyed into the metal-comprising layer and leaving a hermetically-sealed void region between the metal-comprising layer and the substrate.

81. (New) The method of claim 80 wher in less than all of the sacrificial mass is transported to the metal-comprising layer.

82. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein substantially all of the sacrificial mass is transported to the metal-comprising layer.

83. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein the metal-comprising layer comprises one or more of vanadium, zirconium, titanium, tantalum and iron.

84. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein the metal-comprising layer comprises one or more of titanium or tantalum, wherein the component is carbon, and wherein the component is alloyed as one or both of a metal-carbide and a solid solution.